

# Senators Lying in State in the U.S. Capitol

August 30, 2018

On August 31, 2018, [Senator John McCain](#), who died on August 25, will lie in state in the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. Traditionally an honor bestowed upon American statesmen and military leaders, 30 individuals (not including Senator McCain) have [lain in state or honor](#) in the Capitol Rotunda. Additionally, unknown soldiers from World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and from the Vietnam era have also lain in state.

Individuals who served as a government official (e.g., Member of Congress, President, Vice President) and as military leaders have traditionally lain in state, while private citizens have lain in honor. The most recent individual to lie in state was [Senator Daniel Inouye](#) on [December 20, 2012](#). The most recent individual to lie in honor was the [Reverend Billy Graham](#) on February 28 and March 1, 2018. Prior to Senator McCain lying in state, a total of [12 Senators have received that honor](#) (see **Table 1**). **Figure 1** shows Senator John Alexander Logan lying in state from December 30 to 31, 1886.

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

IN10961

**Figure 1. Lying in State of Senator John Alexander Logan**

December 30-31, 1886



**Source:** Library of Congress, "John Alexander Logan, 1826-1886: His Coffin in Capitol Rotunda," at <https://www.loc.gov/item/2006679098/>.

Since President Abraham Lincoln's death in 1865, the caskets of most individuals who have lain in state or honor have rested on the Lincoln catafalque. The [Lincoln catafalque](#) is a platform constructed in 1865 "to [support the casket of Abraham Lincoln](#) while the president's body lay in state in the U.S. Capitol Rotunda."

## Authorization Process

The U.S. Capitol Rotunda is jointly controlled by the House of Representatives and the Senate. As a shared space, the use of the Rotunda often involves a concurrent resolution, agreed to by both the House and Senate, to authorize an individual lying in state or honor. For example, two concurrent resolutions were agreed to authorizing Senator McCain lying in state:

- S.Con.Res. 43 authorized the use of the Lincoln catafalque for Senator McCain's memorial service in the Capitol Rotunda; and
- S.Con.Res. 44 authorized the use of the Capitol Rotunda for Senator McCain to lie in state.

For more information on the use of the Capitol Rotunda, see CRS Report RL34619, *Use of the Capitol Rotunda, Capitol Grounds, and Emancipation Hall: Concurrent Resolutions, 101st to 115th Congress*, by Jacob R. Straus.

When an individual lies in state or honor in the Rotunda, the [Architect of the Capitol](#) and the [U.S. Capitol Police](#) may issue special instructions about public access to the Capitol, public viewing hours, and other protocols. For example, for the lying in state of Senator McCain, access to the Capitol building will be restricted in the morning prior to a congressional service at 11 a.m. Following that service, the Capitol Rotunda will be open to the public from 1 p.m. until 8 p.m. on Friday, August 31.

## Senators Lying in State

To date, 12 Senators have lain in state in the Capitol Rotunda, not including Senator McCain. Senator Henry Clay, who had also served as a Member of the House of Representatives, Speaker of the House, and Secretary of the State, was the first Senator to lie in state (July 1, 1852). The most recent Senator to lie in state, prior to Senator McCain, was Senator Daniel Inouye on December 20, 2012. **Table 1** lists the Senators who have lain in state.

**Table 1. Senators Who Have Lain in State**

(not all individuals were sitting Senators at the time of their death)

| Senator  | Date of Death     | Date of Lying in State |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|
| Henry Clay (Kentucky)                                | June 29, 1852     | July 1, 1852           |
| Charles Sumner (Massachusetts)                       | March 11, 1874    | March 13, 1874         |
| Henry Wilson (Massachusetts) <sup>a</sup>            | November 22, 1875 | November 25-26, 1875   |
| John Alexander Logan (Illinois)                      | December 26, 1886 | December 30-31, 1886   |
| Warren G. Harding (Ohio) <sup>b</sup>                | August 2, 1923    | August 8, 1923         |
| Robert A. Taft (Ohio)                                | July 31, 1953     | August 2-3, 1953       |
| John Fitzgerald Kennedy (Massachusetts) <sup>c</sup> | November 22, 1963 | November 24-25, 1963   |
| Everett McKinley Dirksen (Illinois)                  | September 7, 1969 | September 9-10, 1969   |
| Lyndon Baines Johnson (Texas) <sup>d</sup>           | January 22, 1973  | January 24-25, 1973    |
| Hubert H. Humphrey (Minnesota) <sup>e</sup>          | January 14, 1978  | January 14-15, 1978    |
| Claude Denson Pepper (Florida)                       | May 30, 1989      | June 1-2, 1989         |
| Daniel K. Inouye (Hawaii)                            | December 17, 2012 | December 20, 2012      |
| John S. McCain (Arizona)                             | August 25, 2018   | August 31, 2018        |

**Source:** Compiled by CRS from U.S. Congress, Architect of the Capitol, “Those Who Have Lain in State or in Honor in the Rotunda,” February 2018, at [https://www.aoc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/basic-page/ain\\_state\\_honor\\_2018.pdf](https://www.aoc.gov/sites/default/files/documents/basic-page/ain_state_honor_2018.pdf).

- a. Henry Wilson also served as Vice President to President Ulysses S. Grant from March 1873 until his death.
- b. Warren G. Harding also served as President from March 1921 until his death.
- c. John F. Kennedy also served as President from January 1961 until his death.
- d. Lyndon Baines Johnson also served as Vice President to President John F. Kennedy from January 1961 until November 1963 and as President from November 1963 to January 1969.
- e. Hubert H. Humphrey also served as Vice President to President Lyndon Johnson from January 1965 until January 1969.

## Author Information

Jacob R. Straus  
Specialist on the Congress

---

## Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.